WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gloss coating for a food, said coating comprising (a) whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein, or pea protein, or a combination thereof, and (b) a food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of a mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly-saccharide and a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature.

2. A gloss coating of claim 1, wherein said coating comprises WPC.

3. A gloss coating of claim 1, wherein said plasticizer is a disaccharide.

4. A gloss coating of claim 3, wherein said plasticizer is selected from the group consisting of: sucrose, maltose, trehalose, cellobiose, and lactose.

5. A gloss coating of claim 4, wherein said plasticizer is sucrose.

6. A gloss coating of claim 1, wherein the food is a confection.

7. A gloss coating of claim 6, wherein the confection is chocolate.

8. A gloss coating of claim 6, wherein the chocolate is selected from the group consisting of: milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, bitter-sweet chocolate, sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, and imitation chocolate.

9. A gloss coating of claim 6, wherein the confection is selected from the group consisting of a hard panned confection, a soft panned confection, a starch molded confection and a compressed sugar tablet.

10. A gloss coating of claim 6, wherein the confection has an exterior surface comprising a dried yogurt formulation.

11. A gloss coating of claim 1, comprising WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin that is denatured.

12. A gloss coating of claim 1, comprising WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin that has not been denatured.

13. A gloss coating of claim 1, wherein the coating comprises both denatured and non-denatured WPC or SPC, or both denatured and non-denatured WPC and SPC.

14. A gloss coating of claim 1, further comprising whey protein isolate, soy protein isolate, or both.

15. A gloss coating of claim 1, wherein the coating further comprises a lipid.

16. A gloss coating of claim 15, wherein the lipid is cocoabutter.

17. A gloss coating for a food, said coating comprising:

(a) whey protein isolate (WPI), whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein isolate (SPI), soy protein concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein, or pea protein,

(b) a first food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of a mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly- saccharide and a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature, and

(c) a second food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of a mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly- saccharide and a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature, provided that the second food grade plasticizer is not the same as the first food grade plasticizer.

18. A gloss coating of claim 17, wherein said first food grade plasticizer is a disaccharide.

19. A gloss coating of claim 18, wherein said first food grade plasticizer is selected from the group consisting of: sucrose, maltose, trehalose, cellobiose and lactose.

20. A gloss coating of claim 17, wherein the food is a confection.

21. A gloss coating of claim 20, wherein the confection is chocolate.

22. A gloss coating of claim 21, wherein the chocolate is selected from the group consisting of: milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, bitter-sweet chocolate, sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, and imitation chocolate.

23. A gloss coating of claim 20, wherein the confection is selected from the group consisting of a hard panned confection, a soft panned confection, a starch molded confection and a compressed sugar tablet.

24. A gloss coating of claim 20, wherein the confection has an exterior surface comprising a dried yogurt formulation.

25. A gloss coating of claim 17, comprising WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin that is denatured.

26. A gloss coating of claim 17, comprising WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin that has not been denatured.

27. A gloss coating of claim 17, wherein the coating comprises both denatured and non-denatured WPI, SPI, or both denatured and non-denatured WPI and SPI.

28. A gloss coating of claim 17, wherein the coating further comprises a lipid.

29. A gloss coating of claim 28, wherein the lipid is cocoabutter.

30. A method of providing an edible gloss coating to a food, said method comprising coating said food with (a) a film-forming protein selected from the group consisting of whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein and pea protein and (b) a food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of (i) a mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly-saccharide and (ii) a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature.

31. A method of claim 30, wherein said film-forming protein is WPC.

32. A method of claim 30, wherein said food grade plasticizer is a disaccharide.

33. A method of claim 30, wherein said disaccharide is selected from the group consisting of: sucrose, maltose, trehalose, cellobiose, and lactose.

34. A method of claim 33, wherein said disaccharide is sucrose.

35. A method of claim 30, wherein the food is a confection.

36. A method of claim 35, wherein the confection is chocolate.

37. A method of claim 36, wherein the chocolate is selected from the group consisting of: milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, bitter-sweet chocolate, sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, and imitation chocolate.

38. A method of claim 35, wherein the confection is selected from the group consisting of a hard panned confection, a soft panned confection, a starch molded confection and a compressed sugar tablet.

39. A method of claim 35, wherein the confection has an exterior surface comprising a dried yogurt formulation.

40. A method of claim 30, wherein the WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is denatured.

41. A method of claim 30, wherein the WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is not denatured.

42. A method of claim 17, wherein the coating comprises denatured and non-denatured WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin, or a combination thereof.

43. A method of providing an edible gloss coating to a food, said method comprising contacting said food with

(a) a film-forming protein selected from the group consisting of whey protein isolate (WPI) whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein isolate (SPI), soy protein concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein and pea protein,

(b) a first food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of (i) a

mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly- saccharide and (ii) a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature and,

(c) a second food grade plasticizer selected from the group consisting of (i) a mono-, di-, tri, oligo- or poly- saccharide and (ii) a polyhydric alcohol that is a solid at room temperature, provided that the second food grade plasticizer is not the same as the first food grade plasticizer.

44. A method of claim 43, wherein said film-forming protein is WPI.

45. A method of claim 43, wherein said first food grade plasticizer is a disaccharide.

46. A method of claim 45, wherein said disaccharide is sucrose.

47. A method of claim 43, wherein the food is a confection.

48. A method of claim 47, wherein the confection is chocolate

49. A method of claim 48, wherein the chocolate is selected from the group consisting of: milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, bitter-sweet chocolate, sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, and imitation chocolate.

50. A method of claim 47, wherein the confection is selected from the group consisting of a hard panned confection, a soft panned confection, a starch molded confection and a compressed sugar tablet.

51. A method of claim 43, wherein said WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is denatured.

52. A method of claim 43, wherein said WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is not denatured.

53. A method of claim 43, wherein the coating comprises a mixture of denatured and non-denatured WPI or SPI, or of both.

54. A method of claim 43, wherein the coating comprises two or more film-forming proteins selected from the group consisting of whey protein isolate (WPI) whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein isolate (SPI), soy protein

concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein and pea protein.

55. A method for increasing shelf life of a nut, said method comprising contacting said nut with an aqueous solution comprising (a) a film-forming agent selected from the group consisting of whey protein isolate (WPI), soy protein isolate (SPI), whey protein concentrate (WPC), hydrolyzed whey protein, soy protein concentrate (SPC), beta-lactoglobulin, alpha-lactalbumin, milk casein, egg white protein, wheat gluten, cottonseed protein, peanut protein, rice protein and pea protein agent, and (b) a food grade surfactant, wherein said food grade surfactant is present in said solution in an amount greater than an amount which lowers the surface energy of the solution to its lowest value, thereby increasing its shelf life.

56. A method of claim 55, wherein said surfactant is lecithin.

57. A method of claim 55, further wherein said solution comprises a plasticizer.

58. A method of claim 55, wherein the WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is denatured.

59. A method of claim 55, wherein the WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin is not denatured.

60. A method of claim 55, wherein the coating comprises denatured and non-denatured WPI, SPI, WPC, hydrolyzed whey protein, SPC, beta-lactoglobulin, or alpha-lactalbumin, or any combination thereof.

61. A method of claim 55, wherein said nut is roughened by mild abrasion prior to or currently with contacting said nut with said aqueous solution.

62. A method of claim 55, wherein said nut is a peanut.

63. A method of claim 55, wherein said nut is an almond, cashew, walnut, hazelnut, pecan, macadamia, pistachio, or Brazil nut.